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which intrude between the pure deductions of reason and the results to which they lead, exist in the minds of men, in the temperaments of races, in the development of new ideas leading to social convulsions, in the necessities, real or imaginary, of differing nations, and in the shifting aspects of institutions, which cannot always be pulled down or built up without violence. When such causes are in operation, when the waters are out, and the great deeps are broken up, wars must come ; and no arbitrator and no umpire can grasp or resolve the complicated elements of the dispute. But when, in a period of general peace, questions have sprung up, which touch national honor rather than immediate national interests, which may be rescued from the dominion of the passions, and be subjected to the ordeal of reason by discussion and statement, — then is the period for the higher statesmen of the world to interpose. Then it is possible, with a certain class of minds, clothed with sufficient authority on either side, and without any umpire to vex by a wrong decision, to reach a final termination of the worst of such controversies, and to show that

“Beneath the rule of men entirely great,
The pen is mightier than the sword.”

ART. II.—*The Works of Henry Fielding, with a Life of the Author.* By THOMAS ROSCOE. London : Henry G. Bohn. 1843. 8vo. pp. 1116.

THERE is no word more provokingly equivocal than history. In one sense, it simply indicates a department of literature ; in another, the sum and substance of all departments. He who should read all the so-called historians of the world, from Herodotus to Hallam, would, in common phrase, be considered as possessing a knowledge of history ; but in respect to the thing itself, he might be more ignorant of many ages and nations than one who had devoted his time to plays and novels. In regard to the history of England, especially, it is curious how small a portion of our realized and available knowledge of the English mind and people is derived from the standard narratives of public events. When, after ex-

hausting the strictly historical department of English literature, we turn to its works of imagination, and from these to the numerous trifles in poetry and romance which every age has poured forth, we discover that we are increasing our historical information while we are seemingly gratifying only taste, indolence, or whim. Indeed, it is impossible to understand the causes of England's material supremacy in any summary now extant of the persons and events connected with its different stages. That peculiar combination of virtues and vices, of practical sense and stubborn prejudice, which occurs to us when we think of an Englishman, never was obtained from Hume alone. The literature of the country, in the most generous meaning of that word, is therefore a portion of its history, conducting us close to the heart, character, and external costume, the body and soul, of the nation, and enabling us to realize the people as living beings. A drama by Fletcher, a pamphlet by Nash, a satire by Donne, a novel by Mrs. Behn, a comedy by Congreve, not to mention the stores of information in Spenser, Shakspeare, Milton, Dryden, and Pope, may convey more real historical knowledge, and enable us better to understand England in its manners and unwritten institutions, than Holinshed and Carte, than Oldmixon and Burnet. A person whose notions of dignity prevent him from penetrating into such minor avenues of letters will never gain much more than the shell of history. If the object of historical studies be thus to give an idea of a past age, approaching as near as possible in vividness to that which we have of our own, then certainly no student of the eighteenth century should overlook the life and works of Henry Fielding, — dramatist, lawyer, journalist, magistrate, novelist, and man of wit and pleasure about town. Tom Jones and Joseph Andrews may not seem of so much importance as George II. and Sir Robert Walpole ; but no one ever followed the adventures of the former without acquiring, unconsciously, a vast amount of information shedding light on the policy of the latter.

Of all English authors, the two most exclusively English, the two into whose very being the life of their age and country passed most completely, are Ben Jonson and Henry Fielding ; and no person can be pronounced ignorant of England who has studied their works and obtained a living conception of their personal characters. Our present concern

is with Fielding, who, somewhat deficient in that positiveness and dogmatism of the English character which appear so grandly in old Ben, and in heedless animal spirits suggesting the Irishman rather than the Englishman, still in mind and disposition represents that basis of sensuality, humor, coarse and strong morality, that practical grasp of things in the concrete, and that thoroughgoing belief in the senses, which characterize the genuine Saxon. Scott, indeed, thinks that Fielding can hardly be relished and understood by persons not habitually conversant with old English life. Doubtless, this is true to a certain extent ; but we can name no novelist who so felicitously exhibits human nature through its modification of English nature, or conveys so vivid an idea of both, in modes so universally appreciable.

The period in which Fielding lived and wrote presented a society richly diversified in character and manners, and affording to the moralist exhaustless materials of humor and real life. It had already, in Pope, Swift, Young, Arbuthnot, and others, found its satirists, men who made its crimes and follies the butt of their aggressive wit ; but it had not as yet been mirrored on the page of a deep and genial humorist, combining the requisite insight with the requisite toleration to represent it in its peculiar life and costume. The profligacy and levity which disgraced the higher classes had been partially reflected in the comedies of Congreve ; and Vanbrugh, with a stronger grasp of character, had brought up Sir Tunbelly Clumsey and Sir Francis Wronghead from the country, to introduce them to the Lord Foppingtons and Sir John Brutes of the town ; but the man who should exhibit church and state, town and country, in characters at once national, local, and individual, and be able to present pictures by which after ages might recognize the form and spirit of the time, was yet to appear. Fielding not only possessed the jovial temperament and mental power to perform this truthfully, but the vicissitudes of his life brought him face to face with every order of English society. Born of a noble family, but thrown at an early age into the world to make his own living, he knew almost every form of poverty and distress, and obtained his knowledge of mankind by the scientific process of observation and experience. He knew equally well the mansion of the aristocrat and the garret of the author, the palace and the sponging-house, the court and St. Giles, Westmin-

ster Hall and Wapping, the cathedral and the Methodist meeting, the manor-house and the country inn. To dine with the Duke of Roxburgh or his Grace of Bedford in the West End, to sup with Savage or Boyce in a cellar, — to converse with Lord Chesterfield at Pulteney's, and with a country coachman at an ale-house in Dorsetshire, — to hear some member of the great Whig connection expatiate on the blessings of the Hanover succession, how it preserved English liberty (besides filling his pockets with the wages of corruption), and to hear some old Jacobite squire roar out a song to Charlie over the water, after the fifth bottle, — to know all varieties of fortune, and consequently all varieties of company, and intensely to enjoy every thing short of misery itself, — was the common experience of the great delineator of English character and manners. No other author of his time had his experience of life, and his experience would have converted almost any other author into a spitfire satirist or moody misanthrope. Towwouse, Squire Western, Parsons Adams, Barnabas, and Trulliber, Dr. Harrison, Colonel Bath, Square, Thwackum, Bliful, Allworthy, Partridge, Fanny, Sophia Western, Mrs. Slipslop, Lady Bellaston, — almost every form which selfishness, baseness, levity, licentiousness, clerical worldliness, political corruption, as well as honesty, innocence, and truth, assumed in the men and women of his age, — Fielding knew with a certainty and accuracy almost approaching the perfection of science. And he surveyed the whole with a kind of inimitable absence of spleen and egotism, more wonderful than his knowledge. His works represent greater varieties of rascality and hard-heartedness than those of almost any other writer ; yet he never leaves the impression, that human nature is to be given over as beyond redemption, or that the world is effete.

Fielding was born April 22, 1707. He was the son of Edmund Fielding, an officer who served with some distinction under Marlborough, and who eventually was promoted to the rank of lieutenant-general. By his father's side, Henry was connected with the noble families of Kingston and Denbigh, and through the latter with the renowned house of Hapsburg, from which Austria has drawn her emperors. Gibbon, in that burst of enthusiasm for literary fame in which he exhorts the noble Spencers, enriched by the trophies of Marlborough, to consider still “the Fairy Queen as

the most precious jewel in their coronet," also finely alludes to Fielding's noble descent. "Far different," he says, "have been the fortunes of the English and German divisions of the family of Hapsburg; the former, the knights and sheriffs of Leicestershire, have slowly risen to the dignity of a peerage; the latter, the emperors of Germany and kings of Spain, have threatened the liberty of the Old and invaded the treasures of the New World. The successors of Charles V. may disdain their brethren of England; but the romance of Tom Jones, that exquisite picture of human manners, will outlive the palace of the Escurial and the imperial eagle of Austria." This confident prophecy seems in the present year to be in the course of fulfilment.

Fielding received the rudiments of education from the Rev. Mr. Oliver, a coarse, avaricious, and narrow-minded priest, whom he afterwards immortalized in the character of Parson Trulliber. From the hands of this clerical bear he was removed, when he arrived at a suitable age, to Eton, where he distinguished himself for his quickness of parts, and laid the foundations of that classical knowledge which he always loved, and which he was so fond of parading even in his novels. At this school he formed the acquaintance of many boys who afterwards became eminent, and among others of Lord Lyttelton, Mr. Fox, and Mr. Pitt. It was his father's intention to make him a lawyer, and accordingly he was sent from Eton to Leyden, in his eighteenth year, to study the civil law. How he conducted himself abroad we are not informed; but launched, as he was, into life in the heyday of youth, and with a constitution which could bear any excesses into which his irresistible animal spirits might impel him, we have always thought that his knowledge of law was principally obtained in experiencing the consequences of its violation. His biographers are careful to inform us that he studied hard with the celebrated Professor Vitriarius, and some of them mournfully regret that his father could not sustain the *expense* of carrying him through a course of study so auspiciously commenced, and which was winning him the approbation of the learned Thebans of Leyden. The probability is, that Fielding's expenses were considerably larger than properly belong to a simple devotee of knowledge, and that General Fielding had to support the *bon vivant* as well as the scholar. At any rate, his father's remittances

failed after he had enjoyed the inestimable companionship of Professor Vitriarius for a period short of three years, and he was compelled to return to England. It cannot be doubted that he returned with some knowledge of the world and of the classics, with a keen sense of the pleasurable and a disposition to gratify it in the elegant recreations suitable to a rake and a blood ; but of his civil law we hear no more.

General Fielding was married four times, and had a large and constantly increasing family, which in respect to number was compared to King Priam's ; and accordingly, on Fielding's arrival in England, he found his good-natured father perfectly willing that he should be his own master, and willing also to settle on him £200 a year,—an allowance, however, which was never paid. Thus, at the age of twenty, Fielding was cast upon the world of London, with nobody to assist or check him, and with five particularly ravenous senses to provide with objects of necessity or indulgence. He immediately renewed his acquaintance with many of his schoolboy friends, and plunged resolutely into the dissipation of the time. With a handsome person, a constitution of iron, a fund of spirits which glorified the hour and disregarded the future, with brilliant conversational powers and irresistible *bonhomie* of manner, he soon became popular, and ranked among his associates all the good fellows of the day, from the noble profligate to the needy author. But this kind of life requires money, and Fielding probably soon found that there is a limit to the patience of unpaid landladies and the liberality of fashionable friends, and that he must choose an occupation. It is needless to say that Professor Vitriarius and the civil law were forgotten, and that his thoughts were at once turned to the stage, as presenting the best means of solving the problem, how a young adventurer, whose wit and sprightliness were the talk of London society, could gratify an insatiable love of pleasure without keeping up a portentous mountain of debts. At the early age of twenty, therefore, he became a playwright, having no alternative, as he expressed it, but to be a hackney writer or a hackney-coachman.

His first comedy, *Love in Several Masques*, was produced in 1707. Though it succeeded *The Provoked Husband*, which had attracted large audiences for twenty-eight nights, it still met with a moderate share of success. Wilks,

Cibber, Mrs. Booth, and Mrs. Oldfield did all that good acting could do in promoting the author's interest. When published, the play was dedicated, in an elegant preface, to Lady Mary Wortley Montague, who was a connection of Fielding's. The author may be considered to have started fair in his dramatic career, with nothing to prevent his reaching the most profitable summits of theatrical excellence, provided his genius was calculated for the drama. Congreve, at about the same age, had, under somewhat similar circumstances, laid the foundations of his fortune in *The Old Bachelor*. But *Love in Several Masques* indicates none of Congreve's original merit. It is a well-written imitation of the latter's style, bearing about the same relation to its model which Hayley bears to Pope, or the Right Honorable John Wilson Croker to Scott. In character, plot, and diction, it is but a repetition of the established theatrical commonplaces of that period. In the throng of affected similes and ingenious comparisons, which the author forces into his dialogue to make it seem brilliant, we look in vain for one touch of Fielding's peculiar genius, as afterwards evinced in his novels. The play simply exhibits fashionable life after the approved fashion. The beau is "every thing of the woman but the sex, and nothing of the man beside it"; the lord considers "beauty as the qualification of a mistress, fortune, of a wife," "virtue so scarce as not to be worth looking after, and beauty so common as not worth the keeping"; and the brisk wit of the play, with the usual cant of his function, swears that a charming woman, divested of her fortune, is like "Beau Grin out of his embroidery, or my Lady Wrinkle out of her paint." The dialogue is smart and glib rather than witty, with a continual effort after brilliancy. The only thing which distinguishes the play from the hundred forgotten productions of its school is an occasional touch of humanity or hearty sentiment, proving that the best-humored and most joyous man in Great Britain could not altogether forget his nature, even when cramped in the most artificial of styles. There is something amusing in the moral tone of the prologue, whether we consider the freedom of the particular comedy it introduces, or the coarseness of the plays which succeeded it. It expresses, in rather indifferent verse, the ethical object which at that time every fifth-rate professor of ribaldry and licentiousness affected to

have in view, however scandalous might be his language and *dramatis personæ* : —

“ No private character these scenes expose ;
Our bard at vice, not at the vicious, throws.

Humor still free from an indecent flame,
Which, should it raise your mirth, must raise your shame.
Indecency's the bane to ridicule,
And only charms the libertine or fool.
Naught shall offend the fair one's ears to-day,
Which they might blush to hear, or blush to say.”

Fielding was now fairly entered upon his occupation of man of letters, and during the ensuing ten years produced eighteen comedies and farces. 'The Temple Beau, which succeeded Love in Several Masques, was brought out in 1729. The introductory scene, between Lady Lucy Pedant and Lady Gravely, is a good specimen of malignant genteel raillery ; and the scene in which Sir Harry Wilding breaks into his son's chambers in the Temple, and discovers the peculiar kind of law which his darling student is practising, is finely ludicrous ; but the play is generally uninteresting and devoid of originality. With these two comedies, Fielding seems to have bid adieu to the school of Congreve, and resolved to try a kind of writing which less tasked his fancy, and which he could despatch in more haste. Tom Thumb, a grand caricature of the popular tragedies of the day, including those of Dryden, and aiming to produce laughter by the broadest gushes of drollery, appeared in 1730, and still keeps the stage. In a similar, though even coarser, style is the Covent Garden Tragedy, produced in 1732. The Coffee-House Politician, which Arthur Murphy gravely praises, could have been written only when the author was drunk. The fumes of gin and tobacco, we think, can be detected in most of his plays after he had been two years at work. There is a sort of brazen vulgarity about them which continually suggests the pot-house. The year 1732 seems to have been the most industrious period of his dramatic life. The Mock Doctor, and The Miser, from Molière, The Debauchees, and The Covent Garden Tragedy, were all produced in this year. The wretchedness of the profession he had chosen is perhaps sufficiently indicated in the character of the entertainments he provided for the public ; but in the dedication of The Universal Gallant, in 1734, to the Duke of Marlborough, he in-

dicates another evil. This comedy was condemned with particular emphasis ; and he complains bitterly, that there were some young gentlemen about town who “ made a jest of damning plays.” He speaks of the cruelty of this kind of wit, especially as exercised upon a person like himself, depending on his labors for his bread ; and he adds, that “ he must be an inhuman creature, who would, out of sport and wantonness, prevent a man from getting a livelihood in an inoffensive way, and make a jest of starving him and his family.”

About this time, he seems to have conceived the idea of being a manager himself, the ill success of his plays probably rendering the great theatres indisposed to receive his productions. Accordingly, in 1735, he assembled a company of discarded actors, under the name of the Great Mogul’s Company of Comedians, to perform his own dramas at the small theatre in the Haymarket. Though this project hardly met with any more success than his other contrivances for a living, failure does not appear to have damped his miraculous spirits, or to have impaired the elastic vigor of his mind. At this theatre, we believe, he brought out his two political satires, *Pasquin*, in 1736, and *The Historical Register*, in 1737, which, in themselves of no great importance, were the cause of the celebrated measure of Walpole to restrain the licentiousness of the stage, by giving discretionary power to the Lord Chamberlain to refuse a license for any play which did not meet his approbation.

This measure created at the time a great deal of clamor among the dramatists, and has been the cause of a great deal of cant among them since. During its passage through Parliament, Lord Chesterfield delivered a powerful speech against it. It seems to us, that the merits of the bill must be considered apart from the motives of the framers, in order to form a correct judgment upon it. That some check was needed, there can be no doubt. The evil which the bill assumed to remedy was one which strikes at the very root of society. To outrage morality and decency in public places of amusement, to have a legalized system of entertainments whose only tendency was to make drunkards, blasphemers, and libertines, might be very justly considered as demanding the interference of the civil power, even by those who would give the largest liberty to the publication of irreligious and

immoral opinions. Fielding himself, in 1729, indicated the necessity of some regulation of the stage, when, in mourning over the degradation of authorship, he exclaimed,—"Be profane, be immodest, be scurrilous ; and if you would ride in a coach, deserve to ride in a cart." In truth, the obligation of every ruler to enforce decency, if he cannot enforce morality, called for some measure to check the profligate stupidity and comic irreligion which every broken-down Grub-street hack might indite over his morning gin, to feed a vulgar appetite for brutal merriment.

But important as this measure eventually proved in purifying the stage, nothing can be more ludicrous than to praise Sir Robert Walpole, as Coxe, his biographer, gravely professes to do, for his agency in the reform. He was undoubtedly a man not destitute of virtues, and when we consider that he was a hunted politician, it must be acknowledged he was singularly free from cruel and malignant passions ; but it would be absurd to allege a regard for decency as the motive of any of his acts. He had always been accustomed to the English theatre as it had been left by Charles II., — the theatre of Wycherley, Vanbrugh, Congreve, and Farquhar,—and doubtless considered libertinism as a prominent element in every brilliant play. Besides, he was himself utterly destitute of delicacy and refinement. His talk, it is well known, was confined to two subjects, politics and women ; and he conversed about the latter in a style to shock even the gentlemen of a generation famous for its preference of plain noun substantives to cautious circumlocutions. His summer revelries at Houghton made him the nuisance of the neighbourhood ; and if indecency and profanity, inspired by "potations pottle deep," were heard anywhere with peculiar emphasis and shameless vociferation, it was at the board of England's prime minister. The truth is, he cared nothing about the license of the stage until it attacked his darling power. Fielding might have violated every morality and decency of civilized life, without being much disturbed by Sir Robert ; but in Pasquin and *The Historical Register*, he exhibited and exposed the political corruption of the day ; and Walpole then found it was high time to put a stop to the demoralization of the drama.

But if Walpole's motive was not a hatred of licentiousness, neither was Fielding's motive a hatred of political corruption.

He had a grudge against the prime minister. In 1730, he had solicited his patronage, which Walpole, with his usual contempt for literary men, had refused. In 1731, he dedicated *The Modern Husband* to him, exhorting him to protect the Muses, reminding him that heroes and statesmen had ever been the patrons of poets, and adjuring him to add to his many noble and patriotic qualities the glory of being the protector of literature. The flattery and the advice Walpole seems equally to have disregarded. Accordingly, Fielding became a patriot, as the word was understood at that day ; — that is, he joined those politicians who were indignant at the corruption which they could not themselves wield, or in whose fruits they could not participate. Walpole bought all the patriots he feared, and defied or ridiculed the rest. He never patronized literary merit ; but if he discovered a writer able to do the dirty work of political pampheteering without any scruples whatever, — a man whose mind presented the harmonious combination of tact, impudence, shamelessness, and talent for influencing the mob, — he was ready to give such a person the full enjoyment of the luxuries of the secret-service fund. Thus, he paid £10,000, at different periods, to that “intermediate link between man and the baboon,” the profligate Arnall. As far as Fielding’s political opinions were concerned, he seems to have viewed Sir Robert with great admiration. In his latest work, he speaks of him as “one of the best of men and of ministers.”

We have seen that, during the ten years that Fielding was a dramatist, he averaged about two plays a year. The composition of these occupied but a comparatively small portion of his time. He would sometimes contract to write a farce or comedy in the evening, pass a good portion of the night convivially, and bring in a whole scene the next morning, written on the paper in which his darling tobacco was wrapped. His plays never met with any brilliant success, and failed to provide for his wants. He said himself, that he left off writing for the stage at the period when he should have begun. There are some indications of his genius scattered over his comedies, though but little evidence is given of dramatic art. As a playwright, he never reached the success which was afterwards obtained by such men as Holcroft, Morton, and Reynolds.

There are few memorials extant of his mode of life, dur-

ing these ten years of contrivances and failures. That he plunged heedlessly into dissipation, and led the life of a man of art and pleasure about town, there can be no doubt. As an author, he was distinguished from his brother hacks by having the social position of a gentleman. He repeatedly received pecuniary assistance from Lyttelton and other friends, who were delighted with his vivacity and good fellowship. Lyttelton said that, in conversation, he had more wit and humor than all the celebrities of Queen Anne's day put together. But though thus assisted by the patronage of rich and titled acquaintances, Fielding must have participated more or less in the vices, miseries, and humiliations of the literary drudge of the time,—the hireling of managers and booksellers, the vagabond by practice and author by profession. The appreciation which the government had of literary men is perhaps best indicated in the remark of George I. to Lord Hervey, who had some sins of verse lying heavy on his soul:—“Do not write poetry,—’t is beneath your rank; leave that to little Mr. Pope ; — ’t is his trade.” A man who, in that day, adopted authorship as a means of livelihood was immediately associated with one of the most curious bodies of men of which we have any record ; — the clan of Grub-street hacks, so remorselessly gibbeted by Pope. During the reigns of George I. and George II., it was very difficult for a man of genius to escape this most miserable of social grades. As soon as he fell into the clutches of a bookseller, he had passed through that gate over which was written, “Let those who enter here leave Hope behind.” He had joined that lean and squalid band of *littérateurs*,

“Who must, like lawyers, either starve or plead,
And follow, right or wrong, where guineas lead”;

men on whose brows was blazoned the sign, “Mind to be let”; who were slaves to every stupid, ignorant, and unprincipled publisher, engaged in supplying a demand for frivolity, scurrility, indecency, and sedition; and who, with the tastes of scholars and the wages of draymen, ended at last in being the most dissolute and the most wretched of day-laborers. To be the tenant, at best, of an attic or a cellar; to be hunted by enraged unpaid tradesmen; to wait for weeks in the antechamber of a lord to exchange a dedication for a guinea; to have all the spirit of a man ex-

tinguished by the necessity of creeping and cringing before a vulgar taskmaster ; to know want and need in all their bitterest forms ; to pass at evening from the back-room of a Curril, an Osborne, or a Mist, with a worn-out brain and a jaded body, and rush to purchase a few hours' pleasure in a low debauch ; to exercise more ingenuity in dodging bailiffs and bilking landladies than in writing poems or pamphlets ;—this was the existence of many an enthusiast who came up to London filled with aspirations after fame, and expecting the fortune of a Pope or a Swift. Squalor and beggary were the commonplaces of an author's life. " Could I have guessed," says the aggrieved Mrs. Moneywood to Lackless, " that I had a poet in my house ? Could I have looked for a poet under lace clothes ? " And the good lady goes on to mourn that her floor is all spoiled with ink, her windows with verses, and her door almost beaten down with duns.

But connected with these scholars and men of talent, there were all varieties of quacks, pretenders, panders, and buffoons. Authorship was the last refuge of the outcasts of society,—of liars, libellers, and vagabonds,—of penny, half-penny, and two-penny blasphemers and reprobates,—of men who, having tried every other petty contrivance of knavery to filch a livelihood, at last, on the smallest possible capital of grammar and sense, descended to the trade of writing. Any one who will condescend to glance over the minor literature of the period between 1720 and 1770, for the purpose of catching the general character of its composition, will be surprised at the extreme lowness of its moral and intellectual tone. Its stupidity is absolutely amazing, amid all its efforts to be bright by the grace of ribaldry and scurrility ; and it becomes difficult at times to consider such lifeless slang and imbecile indecency as the product of the human mind. Scattered over Fielding's various works are allusions to this gang of *littérateurs* who degraded authorship even below the level to which poverty and improvidence had reduced it, by offering to do the work of scholars and men of ability for a smaller pittance than the miserable one they already received. Such was the ignorant charlatan that Booth, in the novel of *Amelia*, meets in the sponging-house, collecting subscriptions for a translation of Ovid, of whose language he is as ignorant as a South-Sea islander. The scenes, in *The Author's Farce*, between Bookweight and his hacks, Dash,

Quibble, Blotpage, and Scarecrow, are probably almost literal transcripts of the truth. We extract a specimen, as it tells the story better than any words of ours could do.

Book. Fie upon it, gentlemen! what, not at your pens? Do you consider, Mr. Quibble, that it is a fortnight since your Letter to a Friend in the Country was published? Is it not high time for an Answer to come out? At this rate, before your Answer is printed, your Letter will be forgot. I love to keep a controversy up warm. I have had authors who have writ a pamphlet in the morning, answered it in the afternoon, and answered that again at night.

Quib. Sir, I will be as expeditious as possible; but it is harder to write on this side the question, because it is the wrong side.

Book. Not a jot. So far on the contrary, that I have known some authors choose it as the properest to show their genius. Well, Mr. Dash, have you done that murder yet?

Dash. Yes, sir, the murder is done; I am only about a few moral reflections to place before it.

Book. Very well: then let me have the ghost finished by this day se'nnight.

Dash. What sort of a ghost would you have this, sir? the last was a pale one.

Book. Then let this be a bloody one. Mr. Quibble, you may lay by that life which you are about; for I hear the person is recovered, and write me out proposals for delivering five sheets of Mr. Bayle's English Dictionary every week, till the whole be finished. If you do not know the form, you may copy the proposals for printing Bayle's Dictionary in the same manner. The same words will do for both.

Enter INDEX.

Ho, Mr. Index, what news with you?

Index. I have brought my bill, sir.

Book. What's here? For fitting the motto of Risum teneatis Amici to a dozen pamphlets, at sixpence for each, six shillings; for Omnia vincit Amor et nos cedamus Amori, sixpence; for Difficile est Satyram non scribere, sixpence. Hum! hum! hum! — sum total for thirty-six Latin mottos, eighteen shillings; ditto English, one shilling and ninepence; ditto Greek, four — four shillings. These Greek mottos are excessively dear.

Ind. If you have them cheaper at either of the universities, I will give you mine for nothing.

Book. You shall have your money immediately; and pray remember, that I must have two Latin seditious mottos, and one Greek moral motto, for pamphlets by to-morrow morning.

Quib. I want two Latin sentences, sir,—one for page the fourth in the praise of loyalty, and another for page the tenth in praise of liberty and property.

Dash. The ghost would become a motto very well, if you would bestow one on him.

Book. Let me have them all.

Ind. Sir, I shall provide them. Be pleased to look on that, sir, and print me five hundred proposals and as many receipts.

Book. “Proposals for printing by subscription a New Translation of Cicero Of the Nature of the Gods, and his Tusculan Questions, by Jeremy Index, Esq.” I am sorry you have undertaken this, for it prevents a design of mine.

Ind. Indeed, sir, it does not; for you see all of the book that I ever intend to publish. It is only a handsome way of asking one’s friends for a guinea.

Book. Then you have not translated a word of it, perhaps.

Ind. Not a single syllable.

Book. Well, you shall have your proposals forthwith: but I desire you would be a little more reasonable in your bills for the future, or I shall deal with you no longer; for I have a certain fellow of a college, who offers to furnish me with second-hand mottos out of the Spectator for twopence each.

Ind. Sir, I only desire to live by my goods; and I hope you will be pleased to allow some difference between a neat fresh piece, piping hot out of the classics, and old, threadbare, worn-out stuff that has passed through every pedant’s mouth, and been as common at the universities as their drabs.

SCENE V.—BOOKWEIGHT, DASH, QUIBBLE, BLOTPAGE, SCARECROW.

Scare. Sir, I have brought you a libel against the ministry.

Book. Sir, I shall not take anything against them; for I have two in the press already. [Aside.

Scare. Then, sir, I have an Apology in defence of them.

Book. That I shall not meddle with neither; they don’t sell so well.

Scare. I have a translation of Virgil’s *Aeneid*, with notes on it, if we can agree about the price.

Book. Why, what price would you have?

Scare. You shall read it first, otherwise how will you know the value?

Book. No, no, sir, I never deal that way,—a poem is a poem, and a pamphlet a pamphlet, with me. Look ye, sir, I don’t like your title-page: however, to oblige a young beginner, I don’t care if I do print it at my own expense.

Scare. But pray, sir, at whose expense shall I eat ?

Book. At whose ? Why, at mine, sir, at mine. I am as great a friend to learning as the Dutch are to trade : no one can want bread with me who will earn it ; therefore, sir, if you please to take your seat at my table, here will be every thing necessary provided for you : good milk porridge, very often twice a day, which is good wholesome food and proper for students ; a translator, too, is what I want at present, my last being in Newgate for shoplifting. The rogue had a trick of translating out of the shops as well as the languages.

Scare. But I am afraid I am not qualified for a translator, for I understand no language but my own.

Book. What, and translate Virgil ?

Scare. Alas ! I translated him out of Dryden.

Book. Lay by your hat, sir,—lay by your hat, and take your seat immediately. Not qualified!—thou art as well versed in thy trade as if thou hadst labored in my garret these ten years. Let me tell you, friend, you will have more occasion for invention than learning here. You will be obliged to translate books out of all languages, especially French, that were never printed in any language whatsoever.

When we consider the wretchedness and knavery which were associated in the public mind with the profession of literature, it is not wonderful that such men as Ford, in the reign of Charles I., and Congreve and Horace Walpole at a later period, men of fine powers, but also of little vanities, should have shrunk from the accusation of authorship, and desired to be considered in their mortal capacity, as gentlemen, rather than in their immortal, as writers. By the inevitable law of association, a man rises or falls in public estimation exactly according to the condition and conduct of the class to which he belongs ; and as a class, English authors have not been considered respectable until a comparatively late period. This is, of course, a satire on English society, rather than on its literary men ; but ludicrous as the statement may sound, we believe it is accurate. At any rate, Fielding was relieved from the drudgery of his own tasks, the companionship of dissolute associates, and all those corrupt influences which attached to the writer of his time, by an important event, which he and his best friends were inclined to deem his salvation. This was his marriage, in 1736, to a beautiful, amiable, and accomplished young lady, by the name of Cradock, who, in addition to her other

virtues, possessed a fortune of £1,500. Fielding's mother, dying about this time, left him a small estate in Dorsetshire, worth £ 200 a year. He accordingly forswore Bacchus and Momus, the midnight debauch and the green-room, and went with his wife to his estate in the country, with the determination of reforming his life, and devoting his time to study, literature, and domestic pursuits. But he had no sooner arrived at his new home than his natural improvidence, extravagance, and vanity led him into a style of expense suitable only to a rich country squire. He was among his superiors in fortune, and he became emulous at once to rival them in his mode of living. He was by no means an aristocrat. The Earl of Denbigh once asked him the reason of their spelling the family name differently, the earl's branch placing the *e* before the *i*, and Fielding's branch the *i* before the *e*. "I can't tell, my Lord," was the philosophic reply, "except it be that my branch of the family first learned how to spell." But now that he was a landholder and country gentleman, Fielding seems to have had his nobility roused; for was it not intolerable that a man of the family of Denbigh and Hapsburg should be excelled in ostentation by the Squire Westerns and Sir Tunbelly Clumseys of his neighbourhood? Instead, therefore, of devoting himself to composition, he dashed into the hilarities and hospitalities of English country-life; kept his coach, his dogs, his horses, his servants in yellow liveries, his open house, and free table; and in less than three years he was a beggar, with a constitution shattered by sensual indulgence, and a wife and family dependent on him for support. To these years, however, we owe his knowledge of rural life and character, and to his ruin the novels in which it was embodied. As soon as he found himself incapable of continuing his country life, he at once escaped from the censures and reproaches of his friends and acquaintances,—who, having assisted in his downfall, of course bitterly assailed his improvidence,—and went directly to London, with the intention of studying law. He entered himself as a student in the Temple; alternately studied hard and drank hard; and, after the usual term of probation, was called to the bar. But he was unsuccessful as a lawyer, partly owing to the distrust of attorneys, who hesitated about giving important cases to a wit and a believer in the bottle, and partly to the wild habits of dissipation which still clung to him, and

prevented him from giving his serious and undivided attention to any subject. Even his attendance on his profession, desultory as it was, was soon interrupted by fits of the gout, which now began their remorseless work on his tough and solid frame. He gave up law in disgust, and returned to his original occupation of man of letters. He poured forth in rapid succession a series of fugitive pieces, to provide for the wants of the hour. He thought also of resuming his connection with the stage, and wrote his farce of *Miss Lucy in Town* for that purpose; but the Lord Chamberlain discerned in it an intention to hold up a man of quality to ridicule, and refused his license. We believe, also, that he produced at this time his farce of *Eurydice*. Its fate is sufficiently indicated on its title-page, being published, not, in the usual phrase, “as it was acted,” but “as it was d—mn’d, at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane.”

But the time was approaching when his genius could find some fit expression of the power and richness it had attained through his manifold experience of life. We owe his novel of *Joseph Andrews* to a lucky accident. In 1740, Richardson published *Pamela*. Before this period, prose fiction had hardly occurred to any writer of eminence as affording an opportunity for the acquisition of fame or money. Nonsense, stupidity, and obscenity, or, at best, such moderately clever and immoderately licentious fictions as those of Mrs. Behn and Mrs. Manley, monopolized romance. Novels were below plays and newspapers in respect to literary rank. Indeed, Richardson himself did not contemplate writing a story when he commenced *Pamela*. A bookseller, who had learned his talent for epistolary composition by assuming the position and feelings of others, he was induced to prepare a book of letters for the benefit and instruction of those who found the task of conducting a tender or friendly correspondence to be, what Fuseli’s fop found the reading of Milton, “an exceedingly tough business.” He commenced his work with this humble purpose; but soon adopted the idea of giving to it the interest of a story, and in three months produced *Pamela*.

The success of this novel was of that peculiar kind so flattering to an author who starts an original school of composition. The book became the talk of the town. It ran through five editions the first year of its publication. Every

body, high and low, read and commented upon it. At Ranelagh Gardens, the ladies held it up to each other in triumph as they passed. Pope said it contained more good morality than twenty volumes of sermons. Dr. Sherlock, not daunted by some highly drawn scenes, innocently enough indelicate, recommended it from the pulpit. One significant sign of its popularity was its changing the pronunciation of the name itself, which in Pope is accented on the second syllable, and in Richardson on the first,—the public being willing to introduce discord into a line of the former, rather than spoil the harmony of a few verses which the latter had inserted in the novel. Richardson, at the age of fifty, found himself in some measure the centre of attraction, and his exacting and importunate vanity was fed daily with incense of private and public praise. A clique of female puffers and toadies was especially generous and indiscriminate in panegyric, and did every thing in the power of foolish women to make him morbidly sensitive to blame or ridicule levelled at himself and his heroine. Fielding watched the fever, and, in a spirit of good-natured mischievousness, resolved to parody the novel, in a mock heroic style, as Cervantes had parodied the romances of chivalry in *Don Quixote*, and as Scarron had parodied the romances of gallantry in the *Roman Comique*. To a man of his quick sense of the ridiculous, and knowledge of life and character, the glaring faults of *Pamela* were instinctively evident. The moral pedantry, the conceit of virtue, the exaggerated importance attributed to the conventional distinctions of society, the absence of nature and truth, and the “do-me-good” air of the work, struck his humorous fancy at once. He saw that, in spite of its passages of simplicity and pathos, and the power of mind it evinced, it was still essentially a deception,—that its boasted morality was practically false, and its sentiment mawkish. *Pamela* thus had the honor to provoke the production of *Joseph Andrews*, the beauty and exquisite humor of which have immortalized not only itself, but the work it condescended to make the butt of its genial merriment.

“The History of the Adventures of Joseph Andrews, and his Friend, Mr. Abraham Adams,” was published in 1742. It revealed at once that wealth of invention, humor, and character in Fielding’s large and joyous mind, which

had heretofore found no adequate expression. If we compare this novel with *Tom Jones*, we must pronounce it inferior in story, in variety of character, and in the range of its comprehension of life ; but it seems to us superior even to that, in glad and exuberant feeling, in sensuous beauty, in warm and overflowing benevolence of spirit, and in the combination of the shrewdest practical observation with the most delicious abandonment to pleasurable impulses. The author seems himself to take the most intense enjoyment in the scenes he describes. He realizes them so thoroughly to his own consciousness, that he communicates the glow of their gladness to the reader. The inartistical arrangement and beautiful waywardness of the narrative,—its quick growth from a mere caricature of *Pamela* to an independent work,—the readiness with which the author's mind yields to every temptation to revel in rural scenes of adventure and enjoyment,—the unmatched irony of his allusions to the novel he professes so much to admire,—the heaped and overrunning measure of delight he continually pours forth from an exhaustless fund of good-natured creativeness,—and especially, the broad and deep gushes of humor, instinct with the very spirit of fun, coming from a heart as beneficent as it is mirthful, and flooding all banks and bounds of conventional propriety with overpowering merriment,—make this work one of the happiest, as well as the most natural and most poetical, that ever came from the comic genius of England. But the marvel of the book consists in the union of vast worldly knowledge with childlike enthusiasm,—in the description of the faults and follies of men without the intrusion of an atom of gall or bitterness,—and in enveloping the coarsest and most indisputably natural persons and events in a rich atmosphere of romance. It is an exact reflection of life, but a reflection similar to that we sometimes perceive in a still, deep river, which mirrors the trees and shrubs on its banks, and converts every thing into beauty without altering its form or hue.

In *Joseph Andrews* we have the best exponent of Fielding's nature, with its goodness as an instinct and lack of goodness as a principle. No one can read it without feeling that in the author's heart were the germs of a philanthropy as warm and all-embracing as ever animated a human breast; but from the absence of high moral and religious

aspiration, it seems to expend itself simply in the desire to make the whole world comfortable. Not a shade of moroseness, intolerance, or malignity darkens the sunny and breezy tract which lies before his mind. After fifteen years' experience of the selfishness of the world, and with a frame shattered by indulgence in its vices, we find him in Joseph Andrews radically sound in heart and brain, without a trace of misanthropy in his composition, cheerful, cosey, chirping, with a man's large and wide knowledge united to a boy's hopeful and gleeful spirit. If we consider his mind in respect either to its scope or its healthiness, we do not see how we can avoid placing it above that of any English poet, novelist, or humorist of his century. In strength, depth, and massiveness of mind, Swift might be deemed his equal ; but Swift's perceptions were so distorted by his malignities, that he is neither so trustworthy nor so genial as Fielding. Pope, with all his brilliancy, and epigrammatic morality, and analogies from the surfaces of things, appears little in comparison, the moment he snaps and snarls out his spiteful wit and rancorous pride. Addison and Goldsmith, with their deep and delicate humor, and mastery of the refinements of character, have not Fielding's range and fruitfulness ; nor, perhaps, his occasional astonishing subtlety of insight into the unconscious operations of the mind. Thus, the huntsman, in Joseph Andrews, grumbles as he draws off his dogs from Joseph and Parson Adams, because his master is in the custom of thus encouraging the creatures to hunt Christians, making them follow *vermin* instead of sticking to a hare,—this being, in the opinion of the servant, the sure way to spoil them. Smollett has occasional touches of pathos and power beyond Fielding ; but, not to mention his grossness, his scurility, and his cynicism, his portraits are caricatures, compared with those which appear in *Tom Jones*, *Amelia*, and the novel we have at present under consideration. Richardson, with his intense concentrativeness and hold upon the minutest threads of his subject, his dogged habit of accretion, his matter-of-fact accumulation of uninteresting details, presents so strong a contrast to Fielding's fresh, springing, elastic vigor, and habit of flashing a character or a feeling upon the imagination in a sentence, that comparison is out of the question.

It seems difficult to reconcile Fielding's mind with his
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temperament. In his life, we find him the most heedless of good fellows, delivering himself up to every impulse of sensibility, tossed and tumbled about on every wave of desire, unguided by the experience he gathers from his follies, and repenting of one excess only to rush immediately afterwards into some other. The fact, that he was in conduct so confirmed a “rowdy,” and seemingly as reckless and feather-brained as Tom Fashion, or Sir Harry Wildair, makes us disposed to underrate his intellect. Yet the moment we forget his habit of deifying the moment, and calmly consider his mind, we are amazed at its weight and range,—its sure, steady, deep, and refined perception of the motives of action,—its keen vision, before which cant and hypocrisy instinctively unveil, in the very despair of eluding detection,—its humor, so sly, so shrewd, so profound, so broad, so introversive, penetrating beyond the reach of analysis to the inmost springs of life,—and its just and discriminating views of those things which are commonly overlaid with prejudice and passion.

But passing from these remarks to the work which occasioned them, it is certain that, if *Joseph Andrews* is the most delightful of Fielding’s novels, the first book of *Joseph Andrews* is the most delightful portion of the whole. The strain of irony in which he alludes in the commencement to Richardson is exceeded only by his stroke at Colley Cibber, who had lately published his gossiping apology for his life. Cibber had called Fielding a “broken wit”; and the latter, in alluding to the former’s autobiography, mockingly praises its design. “How artfully, by insinuating that he escaped being promoted to the highest stations in church and state, doth he teach us a contempt of worldly grandeur! How strongly doth he inculcate an absolute submission to our superiors! Lastly, how completely doth he arm us against so uneasy, so wretched, a passion as the fear of shame! how clearly doth he expose the emptiness and vanity of that phantom, reputation!” The account of Joseph’s youth, which follows,—of his position as footboy to Lady Booby, and his promotion thence to the post of footman,—of the unfortunate passion which her Ladyship experiences for him, and his rejection of her unworthy advances,—of the letter which he writes to his sister, the divine Pamela, describing his temptation, and his being turned away by Lady Potiphar Booby from his

place, on account of his heroic virtue,—is steeped through and through with mirth.

The scenes which succeed are even better. Joseph, on his return home, is waylaid at night by robbers, pounded almost to death, and thrown naked into a ditch. A stage-coach passes, and the postilion, hearing a groan, offers to stop. But the coachman tells him to go on, that the stage is confounded late, and that they have no time to look after dead men. A lady, however, interferes, but as soon as she finds the condition that poor Joseph is in, her modesty impels her to desire that he may be left where he is, it being better that he should freeze to death than that her delicacy should be wounded. Every passenger in the coach develops some form of selfishness,—and the coachman, after it is concluded to take Joseph in, swears that it shall not be done unless somebody pays a shilling for the remaining four miles he is to ride. After this point is settled, nobody will lend him a great coat to wrap himself in; the coachman, who has two, refuses, lest they should be made bloody; and the poor fellow must inevitably have perished, were it not that the postilion, whom Fielding is careful to inform us in a parenthesis was transported shortly after for robbing a hen-roost, strips off his own coat, and swearing a great oath, (for which the passengers rebuke him,) exclaims “that he would rather ride in his shirt all his life, than suffer a fellow-creature to lie in so miserable a condition.”

The scenes which succeed, at the ale-house of Mr. and Mrs. Towhouse, beggar description. Betty, the maid, runs to the surgeon, and he, understanding that some gentleman is hurt, hastily dresses himself; but on being informed that the wounded man is only a poor foot-passenger, gravely rebukes Betty for calling him at unseasonable hours, slips off his clothes again, and quietly returns to bed and to sleep. Mrs. Towhouse, with her pursed lips, her harsh, loud voice, her sharp, red-pointed nose, the two bones which stood at “the upper end of that skin which composed her cheeks, almost hiding a pair of small red eyes,” and her poor pin-hearted and hen-pecked husband, now make their appearance. This beautiful shrew, on being informed that her husband had lent poor Joseph one of his shirts, goes off into one of her fits of connubial rage. “But,” says Towhouse meekly, “this is a poor wretch.” “Yes,” returns his spouse, with

unanswerable logic, “ I know it is a poor wretch ; but what the —— have we to do with poor wretches ? The law makes us provide for too many already. We shall have thirty or forty poor wretches in red coats shortly.” “ But,” still persists Towhouse, “ this man hath been robbed of all he hath.” “ Well, then,” answers she, “ where’s his money to pay his reckoning ? ” The husband at last concludes not to contradict her. She compliments the wisdom of this last determination, by saying, “ If the Devil was to contradict me, I would make the house too hot to hold him.”

However, Joseph is in the house, — Betty has managed to borrow some clothing of the hostler, — the surgeon speaks knowingly of the extreme danger of the unwelcome guest, — Mrs. Towhouse is apprehensive that she will have to bear the expense of a funeral, — and the parson, Mr. Barnabas, is called up to Joseph from the bar-room, to give him some ghostly consolation. He desires to know if he has any sins unrepented of ; if he has, to make haste and repent of them as soon as he can, “ that they may repeat over a few prayers together,” — the hint in regard to haste in repentance being given because the company down stairs are about to prepare a bowl of punch, and no one is willing to squeeze the lemons until Barnabas comes. After being thus shrived, the sick man desires some tea ; but Mrs. Towhouse answers, that “ she had just done drinking it, and could not be slopping all day,” and orders a mug of beer to be carried to him instead. The appearance of Parson Adams now changes matters in favor of Joseph, and a few more diverting scenes, brimful of nature and character, conclude the first book. We know not anywhere else such fine ingenuity in exhibiting the selfish element in human nature, or such invincible good-humor in its representation.

A good portion of the rest of the novel is taken up with the adventures of Joseph and Parson Adams on their road homewards, and is full of humorous pictures of the English life of that period, high and low. Of Parson Adams, the most poetical character in any novel not written by Scott,— a man whose virtues had so endeared him to a bishop, that, at the age of fifty, he was presented with a handsome living of £ 23 a year, wherewith to support a wife and six children,— we shall hardly presume to speak. His vanity, simplicity, learning, benevolence, evangelical purity of mind, — his stout

cudgel, pedestrian habits, and copy of *Æschylus*, — are as well known as any thing in romance. The other characters are drawn with a fidelity which leaves nothing to wish. There is Fanny, simpler and purer than Pamela herself, a rose-bud with the morning dew upon it, just the true and innocent creature that we might expect in one who had followed the teachings of the good parson. There is Mrs. Slipslop, with her garrulous vulgarity, her town-bred airs, her impertinence to inferiors, her servility to superiors ; mourning over the “frail sect,” and always “confidious” that she is in the right ; more eager to part with her virtue than others are to retain it,—the perfection of waiting-women, and worth all of Congreve’s put together. There are Lady Booby, and Squire Booby, and Beau Didapper, vivid as life itself. Pamela, towards the close of the novel, is subjected to a process of caricature, whose merry maliciousness might well enrage Richardson. She is represented as seconding the entreaties of Squire Booby to make Joseph give up Fanny, as a match below the rank of her brother ; and on being told that the girl is *her* equal at least, she answers, in a strain of the most exquisite imbecility, — “She *was* my equal ; but I am no longer Pamela Andrews. I am now this gentleman’s lady, and as such am above her. I hope I shall never behave with an unbecoming pride ; but at the same time, I shall always endeavour to know myself, and question not the assistance of grace to that purpose.”

The publication of *Joseph Andrews* gave the author increased reputation, but it made him bitter enemies among the friends of Richardson, and the paltriest means were taken to decry his talents and scandalize his reputation. Richardson himself was stung to the quick, and never forgave Fielding. His resentment took the form of contemptuous commiseration. Rancor ate into his heart, but he expressed it in the style of an offended saint, looking pityingly down on a low sinner who had attacked his unstained purity. He went so far as to deny invention to Fielding, and even after the latter’s death pursued his memory with his deep, quiet, narrow, and unappeasable hatred. With regard to *Joseph Andrews*, he could not see any merit even in *Parson Adams*. Fielding, he said, took the character from *Parson Young*, “but made him more absurd than he is known to be.” On an allusion of one of his correspondents to his own novel, he refers to it

as the Pamela which Fielding “abused in his Shamela. Before his Joseph Andrews, (hints and names taken from that story with a lewd and ungenerous engraftment,) the poor man wrote without being read, except when his Pasquins, &c., roused party attention and the legislature at the same time.” And to crown all, Richardson and his knot of admiring widows and spinsters comforted themselves with the faith, that the author whom they made the target of their petty malice would be soon forgotten.

It is certain that Fielding would not, even to save himself from this prophesied oblivion, put out his reputation to nurse, and attempt to keep the bantling alive by milk diet and baby talk. He was in quest, not so much of praise or fame, as of a subsistence, and accordingly, soon after the publication of his novel, he brought out his comedy of *The Wedding Day*, at Drury Lane. It was acted but six nights, and the author received only £ 50. This comedy is not without humor, sprightliness, and character ; but the stage was not Fielding’s sphere. His careless scorn of the “patrons of the drama” came near producing the condemnation of this play, on the first night of its representation. Garrick, who played Millamour, and who was then a young and skittish actor, entreated him to omit a particular passage calculated to provoke the hisses of the audience, as such a repulse would so flurry his spirits as to disconcert him for the whole evening. “No !” replied Fielding, with an oath ; “if the scene is not a good one, let them find *that* out.” Garrick’s fear proved to be correct ; a storm of hisses and cat-calls greeted his utterance of the objectionable passage ; and he retired, boiling over with rage and chagrin, to the green-room. He there found Fielding in his most ecstatic mood, enveloped in tobacco-smoke, and glorious with champagne. “What’s the matter, Garrick?” said the dramatist, cocking his eye at the actor, “what are they hissing now?” “Why, the scene that I begged you to retrench ; I knew it would not do ; and they have so frightened me, that I shall not be able to collect myself the whole night.” — “Oh !” answered the author ; “they HAVE found it out, have they?”

But while Fielding was thus bearing, cheerily enough, the miseries consequent upon his state of wretched dependence on his pen, dogged by creditors and racked by the gout,—a new calamity, the most severe of his life, burst upon him.

This was the death of his wife, a woman whom he tenderly and passionately loved, and who, in her devotion to his interests and happiness, and the smiling resignation with which she bore the consequences of his errors, deserved the bountiful admiration he afterwards lavished upon her in the character of Amelia. For once, at least, in his life, he was utterly broken down and disheartened. His affectionateness was as characteristic as his joyousness, and the rude shock which both received by this event almost drove him frantic. There is a curious story told about him, in this connection, which, as it is in keeping with his character, we are inclined to believe, though it is not mentioned by Arthur Murphy, Scott, or Roscoe. Mrs. Fielding had a maid, who assisted her in taking care of the children. She was fondly attached to her mistress, and on the death of the latter, so piteously bewailed her loss, that she attracted the notice of Fielding in his affliction. As she seemed the only person who really echoed his own grief, he naturally enough was led into repeated conversations with her regarding the good qualities of his deceased wife. Thus mutually mourning the departed, they insensibly became mutually attached, and in the end they were married. She proved a faithful and affectionate wife ; and though the houses of Denbigh and Hapsburg might not receive any additional splendor from the match, the girl was probably as virtuous and disinterested as any that their line could boast. There is something ludicrous in the dignity of Fielding's biographers, in avoiding this incident of his life. They should have recollected Mrs. Slipslop's righteous indignation at Mrs. Graveairs, for attempting to play the gentlewoman in a stage-coach: — “ My betters! who is my betters, pray? ”

Fielding, as soon as he recovered from the first shock of his wife's death, displayed no lack of industry in following his profession of authorship. Besides a volume of miscellanies, published in 1743, in which was included “ A Journey from this World to the Next,” — an unfinished work, marked by many of his peculiar excellences, but apparently aimless as to general design, — he produced “ The History of the Life of the late Mr. Jonathan Wild the Great.” This work smacks of the vulgarity of the localities to which its characters are principally confined ; but the general idea, that of showing how much of the greatness which passes in this world is identical in spirit with that of the highwayman, is enforced

in a strain of irony which no other author then living could have approached. We can almost sympathize with Wild's detection of the analogies between his own actions and those of many vigorous characters who have exercised murder and rapine in a wider sphere of destruction. "For my own part," he says, "I confess I look on this death of hanging to be as proper for a hero as any other; and I solemnly declare, that, had Alexander the Great been hanged, it would not in the least have diminished my respect for his memory." The episode of Heartfree and his wife has many touches of genuine pathos, and the humanity of Fielding finely underlies the mocking praise he awards to their hard-hearted and selfish persecutor. The conversation between Wild and the Ordinary of Newgate is as deservedly celebrated as any passage in *Joseph Andrews* or *Tom Jones*. The sudden placability of the Ordinary, when Wild interrupts his holy invectives by offering to treat him to a bottle of wine, is exceeded only by his objection to that beverage. "Why wine? Let me tell you, Mr. Wild, there is nothing so deceitful as the spirits given us by wine. If you must drink, let us have a bowl of punch; a liquor I the rather prefer, as it is nowhere spoken against in the Scripture, and as it is more wholesome for the gravel, a distemper with which I am grievously afflicted." This work covers the whole philosophy of that system in accordance with which the strong prey upon the weak, and consider superior intelligence as given to men only to make them more ingenious wolves and more profound tigers.

In addition to these works, Fielding started, in 1745, a paper in the Whig interest, full of enthusiasm for the Hanoverian succession, entitled *The True Patriot*. This, with *The Jacobite's Journal*, commenced in 1748, expressed sufficient zeal for the cause of the ministry to entitle him to receive some of its favors; but his services were not appreciated, and meaner men bore off the rewards of loyalty. At last, in 1749, through the influence of his constant friend, Lyttelton, he received a small pension, with the office of Justice of Peace for Westminster and Middlesex. This was hardly a reputable position. The magistrates of Westminster were called trading justices, being paid for their services in fees,— "a mean and wretched system," says Scott, "which made it the interest of these functionaries to inflame every petty dispute which was brought before them, to trade, as it were,

in guilt and misery, and wring their precarious subsistence out of thieves and pickpockets.” Fielding was now brought into connection, as a justice, with the lowest and vilest classes of society, with rogues, vagabonds, and debauchees, and his own habits seem to have suffered from the character of his environments. To his honor, it must be admitted, he did not avail himself of the means his office afforded, of selling justice, or of wringing from the miserable their last pittance. He was too humane to make money by his position. His predecessor, with less business, had cleared £1000 a year; but Fielding says, in regard to himself, that by composing quarrels, “and refusing to take a shilling from a man who most undoubtedly would not have had another left, I had reduced an income of £500 a year, of the dirtiest money on earth, to little more than £300, a considerable portion of which remained with my clerk.” He appears to have bent his powerful mind, while in this office, to an investigation of the causes and cure of the crimes which at that period were so common in England. His charge to the Grand Jury of Middlesex, and his Inquiry into the Increase of Thieves and Robbers, both full of just remarks and benevolent sentiments, were his chief productions on subjects relating to his magistracy.

His office, as we have seen, gave him but a slender income, but he could convince nobody of the fact. The Secretary of State told him, when he asked for an increase of his pension, that his office was not on all accounts a very desirable one, but that all the world knew it was lucrative. Fielding, therefore, was as poor as ever. Horace Walpole has left a picture of him at this time, at once laughable and mortifying. Rigby and Bathurst, two of Walpole’s friends, carried a servant of the latter, on a charge of attempting to shoot his master, before Fielding. He sent word that he was at supper, and that they must call in the morning; but they pushed into the Justice’s room, and found him banqueting with a blind man, a woman of doubtful character, and three Irishmen, “on some cold mutton and a bone of ham, both in one dish, and the dirtiest cloth. He never stirred, nor asked them to sit. Rigby, who had seen him come so often to beg a guinea of Sir C. Williams, and Bathurst, at whose father’s he had lived for victuals, understood that dignity as little, and pulled themselves chairs,—on which he

civilized." Rigby and Bathurst doubtless proved themselves insolent puppies by this conduct, and Horace Walpole an unfeeling one by his mode of narrating it ; but there is little in this reflection to excuse the abject position in which the account places the magistrate.

It was amid the disgusting and ill-paid duties of this office, and while under the influence of the habits it engendered, that Fielding composed *Tom Jones*, the great prose epic of English literature. He was indebted for the means of subsistence, while writing it, to Ralph Allen, Lyttelton, and the Duke of Bedford. The former has been immortalized, both in the character of Allworthy, and in the celebrated couplet of Pope :—

“ Let humble Allen, with an awkward shame,
Do good by stealth, and blush to find it fame.”

His kindness to Fielding was, we believe, wholly unsolicited. He once sent him two hundred pounds anonymously, or, at least, before he knew him in any other way than as a distressed man of letters.

Tom Jones was published by Andrew Millar, the Murray of that period. He was a shrewd, enterprising, and not illiberal bookseller, but celebrated, even in that generation of topers, for his devotion to the bottle. It is said, that for years there was not a day in which he was not in that muddled state, which, in Bacchanalian phraseology, goes under the name of “ boosy.” In this condition he could always be found behind his counter, going through the business of his occupation with commendable gravity, and though hardly able to stand or speak, still contriving to avoid making mistakes in his dealings both with authors and customers. He bought *Tom Jones* for six hundred pounds, and, on its meeting with extraordinary success, generously presented the author an additional hundred, of his own free will.

In *Tom Jones*, Fielding has comprehended a larger variety of incidents and characters under a stricter unity of story than in *Joseph Andrews* ; but he has given to the whole a tone of worldliness which does not mar the delightful simplicity of the latter. As an expression of the power and breadth of his mind, however, it is altogether his greatest work, and in the union of distinct pictorial representation with profound knowledge of practical life, is unequalled by

any novel in the language. We not only see all the personages as clearly as if they were brought bodily before our eyes, but so close and lifelike is the imitation, that the moment they converse, the page itself seems to speak, and, in our illusion, we hardly distinguish reading from listening. Characters and events are so softly and yet so indelibly impressed on the imagination, that we care not to discriminate between the memory of them and the memory of facts which have fallen within our own experience. It would almost seem to argue an unreasonable skepticism to doubt the existence of such a veritable personage as Square, lover of Plato and Molly Seagrim, with his brain full of transcendental morality, and his heart full of *descendental* appetites ; of Thwackum, malignant orator of grace, and most graceless of boisterous malignants ; of Ensign Northerton, the very pink of rakes, braggarts, and upstarts, with his profane disrespect of "Homo," his contempt of all learning associated in his mind with pedagogic flagellations, and his exultation at deceiving "the old put," his father, out of his intention of making him a parson ; of Blifil, the most sublime of didactic coxcombs, with his deep and solemn shamming of virtue, so completely a hypocrite that he almost conceals himself, and seems more an appearance than a being ; of Allworthy, in whose delineation the author's whole beneficence of heart overflows ; and of Tom Jones himself, with his unguided heart glowing with all the impulses, disinterested and sensual, and allowing each to act of its own will, — sincere, generous, affectionate, and unprincipled. But above all, what shall we say of Squire Western, next to Falstaff the most universally popular of comic creations, and as genuine a lump of clay and passion as ever started into being under the magical touch of a humorist ? His shrewdness, his avarice, his coarse kindness, his sense-defying Jacobitism, his irresistible unreasonableness ; his brutal anger, making the page which chronicles it shake with oaths, interjections, and screaming interrogations ; — loving his daughter as he loves his dogs and horses, and willing to use the whip and the spur the moment she does not obey him with due alacrity, as in the case of his other brutes ; and loving himself with a depth of affection, with a disregard of every thing else on and over the earth, which touches the pathetic in selfishness ; — all these go to make up a character so natural and yet so eccentric.

tric, as to disturb our faith in the dogma, that reason is the separating line between man and the beast. Parson Supple, his spiritual adviser and boon companion, looking after the Squire's soul, and running on his errands, is a suitable appendage to this "good old English gentleman." Then there is Black George, the gamekeeper, oscillating between rascality and honesty, like a pendulum; the interesting and accomplished family of that gentleman; and Partridge, with his proverbs and proverbial pedantry, the unfortunate scape-goat of the sins and vices of others. Sophia Western, whose rich, red lips almost peep through the page as we read; Mrs. Honor, her maid, a younger sister of Mrs. Slipslop, with the peculiarities of her blood tripping from her tongue in every impertinence she utters; Mrs. Waters and Lady Bellaston, admirably discriminated in their worthlessness; and Mrs. Western, and Mrs. Fitzpatrick, and Molly Seagrim, and Mrs. Miller,—all are indisputably genuine, though not altogether flattering delineations of female character.

We are, in fact, made acquainted through this book with England, as it was in the middle of the eighteenth century. Every personage, from lord to chambermaid,—every incident,—every description of a custom, an amusement, a fashion of dress,—every form of colloquial speech, vulgar or delicate,—every allusion to the political parties which divided the country, is a mine of information; and the whole gives the lie direct to half the impressions we derive from history, and enables us to grasp the reality and substance of the national life. Squire Western is probably but a heightened representation of the country gentleman of that period, as he was found by Walpole or Newcastle, when the minister desired to push a measure through the House of Commons, and established commercial relations with its obstinate Jacobites and patriots "open to reason." Western would have imperfectly comprehended a question of national policy, but would be sure to have known the market price of votes. The political corruption of that period has been often laid to the different administrations of the government. But no reader of Fielding can fail to see how common it was, for a person holding a portion of the legislative power of the country, to consider it a piece of property, which should not be induced to alter a simple "aye" without an introduction to the secret-service money. There is a great difference between a prime min-

ister who corrupts representatives, and a prime minister who has to deal with representatives who set themselves up for sale. In the latter case, that statesman would seem to be the best, who contrives to purchase the largest number of votes with the smallest expenditure of the public money.

In addition to the wealth of character and incident in this novel, its fulness of spirit and humor, and its almost exhaustless capacity to amuse and to instruct, the story is distinguished from that of most works of fiction by its artistic unity and completeness. It contains nothing, if we except the episode of the Old Man of the Mill, which interferes with the main design. With a beautiful art, so felicitously concealed as to seem instinctive, incident grows out of incident, at once springing from and developing character ; and the stream of events, growing broader with every accession, flows naturally forward to the catastrophe. The style also varies with the scenes, exhibiting a singular command of apt and pictorial language, and is especially delicious in the expression of irony and mock-heroic grandeur. The description of the battle between Molly Seagrim and half of the parish, in which she does such direful execution among the country nymphs and swains, is a masterpiece of triumphant parody. But no quotations or allusions would do any justice to the exquisite perfection of this novel, in respect either to its plot, its characters, or its style.

There has been much speculation on the question, whether Tom Jones is an immoral work. Scott decides it somewhat after the manner in which Dr. Johnson decided a similar question regarding the morality of *The Beggar's Opera*. He says that the novel never added one libertine to the company of licentious debauchees ; and he fears that the frankness and generosity of the hero have found as few imitators as his vice and indiscretion. This judgment, however, implies that all minds are healthy enough to escape contamination from immoral works of imagination, which is just the reverse of the fact.

The discussion of the question in respect to the novel under consideration may be considerably narrowed by attempting to define in what the immorality of a work consists. Some persons, without allowing for changes in national manners, pronounce coarse and direct expression, in plain, plump words, to be immoral ; and in this sense, Tom Jones

shares the stigma with Shakspeare and Ben Jonson, with Dr. South and many a luminary of the Church. Others consider all representation of profligacy and falsehood, unaccompanied by resounding maxims declaring their naughtiness, to be immoral; and in this sense, every delineator of life and character is bound to be immoral by the first principles of his art. Others, without the breadth of mind to take in the whole design and total effect of a work of imagination, condemn it as licentious by fastening their moral gripe on some particular scene, which should be viewed in its relations. A few, with a juster and more catholic judgment, confine the accusation to books *intended* to inflame the passions and unsettle the principles, coming from an incurably corrupt mind, which basely makes itself the pander to appetite and crime.

Certainly, in this last meaning, Tom Jones cannot be pronounced immoral. Fielding's object was, undoubtedly, that which he professed in his preface, — to recommend goodness and innocence ; to show that no acquisitions of guilt can compensate for the loss of that solid inward comfort of mind which is the lot of the virtuous ; to employ all his wit and humor in laughing men out of their favorite vices and follies ; and to inculcate the truth, that virtue and innocence fall into the snares of deceit and villainy chiefly through indiscretion. He also asserts, that there is nothing in the book “inconsistent with the strictest rules of decency, or which can offend the chastest eye in its perusal,” — a statement which sounds ironical in this age, but which, we know, would not have seemed strange fifty years ago. There are persons living now, who, in their boyhood, read Tom Jones aloud to their mothers and grandmothers, without any thought of impropriety on either side.

Not only must Fielding be acquitted of intentional immorality in his composition of the novel, but it must also be allowed that he has indicated the connection of vice and misery, indiscretion and discomfort, as closely as the logic of Chillingworth himself could rivet it. But the true question of literary morality lies back of all the considerations to which we have referred. The morality of a book is something unconsciously impressed upon it, and is independent of intention. It takes its tone from the character of the author, rather than from his opinions or his will. If sensuality or malice pervades his mind, it will find vent in his book, however cautiously he

may abstain from directly expressing it, however affluent he may be in moral and religious commonplaces. Thus we see many a modern novel, professing the loftiest principles and sentiments, seemingly only too elevated to be practical, and yet as truly licentious as the amatory verses of Rochester or the rakish comedies of Sedley ; and many a treatise of theology, studded all over with Scripture quotations, and yet as malignant and irreligious in spirit as if it were inspired by the Devil himself.

If we try Fielding by this test, we shall, it is true, find Tom Jones as moral as *The Loves of the Angels*, or *The Corsair*, not to speak of Little's poems, *Don Juan*, and the prodigies of profligacy we import from France ; but we shall not find it moral in the true sense of the term. Fielding suffered too much from his own vices and follies, not to know what a miserable sham and deceit is that happiness which comes from a violation of moral laws, and he would have been the last man intentionally to recommend it to others ; but his character was what his life had made it, and his sensations accordingly penetrate his verbal ethics, flash out in the turn of his sentences, and peep through the best-intentioned morsels of moral advice he is so ready to give. There were no malignant vices in his composition, nothing which urged him to defy heaven or vilify and hate man ; but he necessarily had too much toleration for what Gibbon, with characteristic indulgence to the sensual, calls the “ amiable weaknesses of our nature ”; and this prevents him from arranging his wonderfully vivid representations in relation to higher laws than those which were in the things themselves. He had, in short, if the term be admissible, a good deal of honest sensuality ; that is, he never elaborately disguised it in dainty sentiment and philanthropic metaphysics, according to the modern custom ; and though the quality is a blot upon his works, and limits the upward movement of his mind, it is hardly so insidiously depraving as the Satanic sentimentality and sugared corruption which have succeeded it.

The brilliant success of Tom Jones, which lifted Fielding at once to an almost undisputed eminence among the great writers of his century, seems to have emboldened him to proceed in his new vocation. He accordingly commenced *Amelia*, and completed and published it in 1751, — performing, at the same time, his duties as a magistrate, and occa-

sionally throwing off a pamphlet on some subject which engaged public attention at the time. His proposal for making an effectual provision for the poor proves that he had applied his mind with no inconsiderable force to social and political questions; and his short essay on the mysterious case of Elizabeth Canning, "in which," as Scott observes, "he adopted the cause of common sense against popular prejudice, and failed, in consequence, in the object of his publication," reflected credit on his sagacity and his benevolence.

Amelia is a novel not generally read even by those who appreciate the other works of Fielding. It must be admitted that it indicates a decay of vigor, not in the delineation of character or in the vividness of particular scenes, but in that fusion of all the parts into a living whole, and that elastic and onward movement of the narrative, which are the charm of Tom Jones. It lingers and loiters at times around a character or an incident, not lovingly and in the spirit of enjoyment, as in Joseph Andrews, but seemingly from a lack of strength or invention to proceed. But, of all his novels, it leaves the finest impression of quiet domestic delight, of the sweet home feeling, and the humanities connected with it. We have not the glad spring or the glowing summer of his genius, but its autumnal mellowness and mitigated sunshine, with something of the thoughtfulness befitting the season. Amelia herself, the wife and the mother, arrayed in all matronly graces, with her rosy children about her, is a picture of womanly gentleness and beauty, and unostentatious heroism, such as never leaves the imagination in which it has once found a place. This character Fielding is said to have drawn from the model of his first wife, while in Booth he intended, partly, at least, to represent the weaknesses, follies, and improvidence which characterized himself. Nothing can be more beautiful than the fidelity with which Amelia adheres to her affectionate but unworthy husband, the refinement of love she displays in concealing from him her knowledge of his intrigue with Miss Matthews, and the full-hearted affection with which she greets him on his return from every adventure, where his imprudence has laid up a new store of sorrows for herself. Booth never thinks her unreasonable but on two occasions, when she insists on his breaking off his acquaintance with two friends, apparently from mere caprice. He afterwards discovers, that they were pestering her with dishonorable pro-

posals, and that she would not tell him the true reason of her dislike, from the apprehension that the result would be a duel.

Most of Fielding's pathos is unintentional and unconscious, and is commonly overlooked both by readers and critics ; but there is one scene in this novel which goes directly to the heart. We refer to that where Amelia is represented alone at evening in her little room, expecting, after a weary day of anxiety and care, her husband to supper, and pleased at the idea that she has prepared a meal of which he is particularly fond. She waits hour after hour until midnight, but he does not come. It appears that he is at the gaming-table with Captain Trent, hazarding and losing guineas by the score, and laying up fresh troubles for himself and her. She, the same afternoon, had checked a desire to buy some little luxury for herself, because it would cost sixpence, a sum she thought she could not spare from their small hoard. We are inclined to forgive Captain Booth all his errors but this disappointment to Amelia. No reader ever mustered sufficient charity to cover that cruel thoughtlessness, although the wife pardoned it at once.

The characters of this novel are delineated in Fielding's most felicitous manner, and possess sufficient variety to have established a reputation for any other author. Dr. Harrison, a clergyman after the style of Parson Adams, but discriminated from him by his abruptness of tone, his greater knowledge of the world, and his cynicism, assumed to veil a boundless beneficence, is a grand personation of practical Christianity. Sergeant Atkinson, with his deep, quiet, humble love, his devotion to Booth and Amelia, his self-sacrificing generosity, is one of those embodiments of goodness of heart which Fielding, to his honor, delighted to represent. The fair and frail and malicious Miss Matthews ; the shrewd, knowing, learned, equivocal Mrs. Bennet ; the vapid Mrs. James ; Colonel Bath, with his high sense of honor, and perfect willingness to blow out the brains of his best friend on a punc-tilio ; Colonel James, the polite town rake, complacent in his shallow baseness ; the dogmatic young theological student, who violently disputes with Dr. Harrison, to the great chagrin of his politic father, who appreciates benefices better than logic ; the little, round, fat Mrs. Ellison, the best natur-ed of pimps ; and, especially, that wretched devotee of lust, and embodiment of all which is disgusting in sensuality, the

lord who is her employer,—are characters which Fielding in his best days hardly excelled. The descriptions of town life, also, are so graphic, that we seem transported to the London of 1750. The masquerade at Ranelagh, and the scene at Vauxhall, where the two brainless town-bloods frighten Amelia and the children with their profanity and insolence, are daguerreotypes of manners. The author evidently intended that the novel should have a moral effect upon his readers, and the fact that many scenes would now be accounted coarse or licentious only proves that manners have changed. “*The Beaux Stratagem*” or “*Love and a Bottle*” would now be considered strange productions to find in the hands of a lady ; yet the virtuous and tender Amelia, who reads Barrow’s sermons with so much profit, and whom Dr. Harrison considers the saint of his church, is represented as solacing a weary hour of impatient watching in perusing “the admirable comedies” of Farquhar.

The comparative failure of *Amelia* threw Richardson and his admirers into ecstasies. Mrs. Donallan asks him if he is going to leave them to Captain Booth and Betty Thoughtless for their examples. “As for poor Amelia, she is so great a fool, we pity her, but cannot be humble enough to desire to imitate her.” Richardson, in reply, assures her that Captain Booth has done his own business ; that the piece is as dead as if it had been published forty years ago, as to sale ; and that Mr. Fielding “seems in his last journal ashamed of it himself, and promises to write no more.” He compliments his correspondent on her “admirable” remark, that, by several strokes in the novel, Fielding “designed to be good, but lost his genius, low humor, and spirit, in the attempt.” Again, he chuckles over the assumed fact, that Fielding had been beaten by his own imitators, and that since the time “his spurious brat, *Tom Jones*,” met with its “unaccountable success,” the public have discovered what “stuff” they have been admiring. But his happiest expression of petty rancor is contained in that letter, written in 1752, in which he affects to pity Fielding ; describes how he insulted the sisters of the latter, by his depreciation of their brother ; and narrates the whole in a strain of moral coxcombry, unexcelled in the annals of Pharisaic criticism. “I could not help telling his sisters, that I am equally surprised at, and concerned for, his continual lowness. Had your brother, said I, been

born in a stable, or been a runner at a sponging-house, one should have thought him a genius, and wished he had had the advantage of a liberal education, and of being admitted into good company." He goes on to say, that it is beyond his conception, that a man of family, having "some learning, and who really is a writer, should descend so excessively low in his pieces. Who can care for any of his people?" But the most ludicrous outbreak of conceit, both of respectability and wit, follows this precious specimen of Christian commiseration. "A person of honor," he says, "asked me, the other day, what he could mean by saying in his Covent Garden Journal, that he had followed Homer and Virgil in his *Amelia*. I answered, that he was justified in saying so, because he must mean Cotton's *Virgil Travestied*, where the women are drabs and the men scoundrels." Keats represents himself as once being in a very genteel circle of wit-snappers, who, in speaking of Kean, the actor, affected to regret that he kept such low company. Keats remarks, that he wished at the time he was one of that company. No one can read Richardson's correspondence, and be bored by the insipidity of his female toadies and persons of honor, without being perfectly willing to exchange their refinement for Fielding's "excessive lowness."

Fielding was superior to the small malice and miserable vanity which would prompt such a mode of attack as that adopted by Richardson. To his large and tolerant mind, it would have appeared ridiculous to wreak a personal spite against an author by depreciating his works. Pope and Swift had both referred to him in early life, with a contemptuous fleer at his talents ; but it never entered his brain to refuse to quote and praise them because they disliked him. In the fifth number of the Jacobite Journal, published at a time when he knew that Richardson was exulting over his supposed failures, and making his genius the butt of his insolent pity, he speaks in terms of high eulogy of Clarissa Harlowe. He knew human nature too well not to divine the meanness to which the delineator of Clarissa and Clementina would descend, when his sensitive vanity was stung by ridicule ; but it was a part of his philosophy to view such things with good-natured indulgence, and not hesitate to acknowledge the good qualities which might exist in connection with vices so paltry and so malignant.

Millar, Fielding's publisher, paid one thousand pounds for *Amelia*, thinking it would meet with the success of *Tom Jones*; but while it was in press, he obtained a hint that it was an inferior work, and might turn out a bad speculation. His stratagem to save himself from loss indicated the ingenuity of a master-mind in "the trade." At a general sale to the booksellers, he told them, with his accustomed tipsy gravity, that he should sell his other publications at the usual terms, but that there was such a demand for *Amelia* he should be compelled to decline all offers for that except at a reduced discount. The booksellers, cunning as they were, were all deceived by his manner, greedily swallowed the bait, and the whole edition was ordered before it was published.

After the publication of his last novel, Fielding returned to his former occupation of newspaper essayist, and commenced, in 1752, *The Covent Garden Journal*. In this paper he published some of his most agreeable essays. His style in these has the cosiness and abandonment of an after-dinner chat, and is peculiarly felicitous in gossiping comments on literature and manners. In this journal he was drawn into a verbal quarrel with Smollett, who had established a fame by *Roderick Random* and *Peregrine Pickle* second only to his own. The *Journal* was discontinued on account of Fielding's health, which now suffered from a complication of diseases, of which the principal were asthma, dropsy, and jaundice. The physicians recommended a milder climate as the only means of preserving his life, and Lisbon was fixed upon for his residence. Before he went, however, he undertook, at the request of the Duke of Newcastle, and for a fee of six hundred pounds, to extirpate some gangs of robbers and murderers who infested the metropolis. After performing this duty with great sagacity and complete success, he prepared for his voyage. On the 26th of June, 1754, he took that melancholy leave of his children which he has described with such affectionate pathos in his *Voyage to Lisbon*. This, his latest work, cut short by death, indicates that his mind was bright and his spirits joyous, to the very verge of the tomb. He died at Lisbon, in the beginning of October, 1754, in the forty-eighth year of his age. His family, consisting of a wife and four children, were left penniless, but were preserved from want by the kindness of Sir John Fielding, and the ever-active charity of Ralph Allen.

It would seem that the most rigid moralist, in reviewing the events of a life illustrated by virtues so imperfectly rewarded, and by vices so severely expiated, as that of Fielding, would be inclined rather to regret his misfortunes than harshly to condemn his faults. His whole existence, from the age of twenty, was one long struggle with fortune, in which he bore humiliations and experienced distresses which would have crushed a more sensitive spirit at the outset. His life, judged by its external events, without taking into account the character of the man, appears as wretched as any chronicled in the calamities of genius. But it was the peculiar constitution of his nature, that those qualities which whirled him into excesses blunted the edge of the miseries into which his excesses plunged him. In his lowest state, he rarely desponded, rarely lost the vigor of his intellect and the gladness of his disposition. Lady Montague, writing soon after she heard of his death, says that "his happy constitution (even when he had with great pains half demolished it) made him forget every evil, when he was before a venison pasty or over a flask of champagne ; and I am persuaded," she adds, "he knew more happy moments than any prince upon earth. His natural spirits gave him rapture with a cook-maid, and cheerfulness when he was starving in a garret." As a consequence of this felicity of disposition, he never whined about his misfortunes, never scolded the public for neglecting him, never represented his sensualities and weaknesses as the result of his ardent genius. From all nauseous cant of this kind, which so commonly infects authors and their biographers, Fielding's sense of humor would have preserved him, even if he had not been saved from it by his sense of the pleasurable. And that much abused noun of multitude, the World, against whose injustice poets have ever stormily inveighed, may find two consolations, at least, for its comparative neglect of Fielding ; — in the thought, that it could not possibly have lavished upon him an amount of wealth which his improvidence would not instantly have wasted ; and in the reflection, that, but for his poverty, he never would have produced those exquisite creations of humor and imagination, with their large knowledge of human nature and their large toleration of human infirmity, which have made his name immortal.

seems to be aiming after the praise of copiousness and versatility as a poet. There is obvious danger in such a course, but we will not quarrel with him for taking it, if it leads to other essays as striking and brilliant as this delightful "Vision." Its merits are quite equal to its brevity, which is certainly remarkable, for the whole might be printed in one column of a newspaper, though, by the aid of half-titles, blank pages, and other typographical devices, it is made to fill a tiny volume. There is something in the chime of the versification and the turn of the imagery which reminds one strongly of Coleridge's Christabel, though the imitation is not marked; and we do not think it would suffer at all by comparison with that wildly beautiful poem. This is high praise, and if we were writing an article, we should be tempted to justify it by transferring the whole contents of the book to our pages; as it is, our readers must be content with a very brief specimen.

"Joy comes, grief goes, we know not how ;
 Every thing is happy now,
 Every thing is upward striving ;
 'T is as easy now for the heart to be true
 As for grass to be green or skies to be blue, —
 'T is the natural way of living :
 Who knows whither the clouds have fled ?
 In the unscarred heaven they leave no wake ;
 And the eyes forget the tears they have shed,
 The heart forgets its sorrow and ache ;
 The soul partakes the season's youth,
 And the sulphurous rifts of passion and woe
 Lie deep 'neath a silence pure and smooth,
 Like burnt-out craters healed with snow.
 What wonder if Sir Launfal now
 Remembered the keeping of his vow ?" — p. 7.

E R R A T A.

Page 46, 3d line from the bottom, for "1707" read "1727."

" " 9th " " for "keeping" read "heaping."

" 52, 3d line from the top, for "art" read "wit."

" 75, 14th line from the bottom, for "were" read "inhere."

" 58. The sentence beginning at the 14th line from the bottom should read thus:—"A bookseller, who had heard of his talent for epistolary composition, especially in assuming the position and feelings of others, induced him to prepare a book of letters," &c.